

should be considered and should be changed.

All of us have had a 2-week recess. I was in Wyoming for that entire 2 weeks and, I must tell you, I come back reinforced and rededicated to the idea that we need change. I heard from nearly everyone there: "We are pleased with what has begun in Washington. We are pleased with the ideas." Certainly not everybody agrees with every detail. But the fact is that at least in my experience, people want us to move forward.

To do that we are going to have to continue to make clear, I think, the perception of what we are seeking to do. And the opposition, those who are opposed to change, and obviously the direction and the agenda of the administration is to say to people who are asking for change, all they want to do is do away with programs. Their notion is going to be to create fear—fear of change—and we are going to have to do something about that.

I think there are great debates, there are differences in view, clearly, of how people see the world, and there is a great deal of difference right here in this body among the Members. Some believe, genuinely and legitimately, that more Government is better, that we ought to have more money to spend, that the Government does a better job of spending money than do the taxpayers. On the other hand, most of us do not agree with that notion and want to make it smaller.

There is a legitimate debate and there is a great debate. So we have an agenda, and in order to do that, Mr. President, we are going to have to move through that agenda. I respect the purpose of the Senate in terms of its ability to go into depth and it is a deliberative body, and that should be the case. But it should not be an obstructionist body. It should not be a body that simply ties up this great debate, but rather it ought to be out there and we ought to have an agenda and we ought to move forward.

There are a number of things, certainly, that we clearly ought to talk about. We are talking about one of them now, and that is tort reform, something that needs to be done. We need also to talk about welfare reform. That is a legitimate thing we ought to do. We ought to take another look at crime. Clearly, health care needs some revision. We need to have regulatory reform. We need to balance the budget.

These are the agenda items that we have a responsibility, Mr. President, to undertake. I think if those of us who were elected this year have any message, the message is let us move forward with these issues, let us talk about these issues. We are willing to accept the results, of course. But we are not willing to accept the idea that we do not have an agenda, that we are not going to deal with the questions that the American people have asked, that we are simply going to take up all our time in obstructionist kinds of ac-

tivities, that the rapid response team is always going to be opposed to change. So that is where we are, Mr. President. I think we have the greatest opportunity, and I thought that last month. And I have to tell you, having spent 2 weeks in Wyoming, that notion, in my view, is simply reinforced that people do want us to go forward.

Mr. President, I am not sure of the agenda. But the freshmen had a certain amount of time.

I yield to my associate from Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

THE MEDICARE PROGRAM

Mr. SANTORUM. I thank the Senator for yielding. I would like to address a specific issue in the next 100 days in the Senate that I think is going to attract a lot of attention. It has already attracted a lot of attention. It is an issue of great importance to this country and people rely on this program—that is the Medicare Program. There is a lot of discussion going on in this town—and I hope across America—about Medicare and where it fits in with the scheme of things here in Washington.

Is Medicare going to be used to balance the budget? Is Medicare a program that is in trouble? What is the truth? What is the real story and who do you believe? Unfortunately, in Washington, that is a problem we have a lot, which is that every issue, irrespective of the importance of the issue, turns into a partisan battle, and one side says one thing and the other side says another. You would think with an issue such as Medicare, with the information we have before us, that we could act as adults and face the problem squarely, maturely, discuss it, debate it, and come up with a solution to the problem.

But as is the case around here all too often, political gain comes before responsible action. We have folks who think we can make political gains from Medicare, so let us delay responsible action for a while and see how much hey we can make in the process.

Here are the facts. The facts are that the Medicare trustees issued a report that says that Medicare will be insolvent by the year 2002. In other words, it will not have any money left in the trust fund to pay out benefits to anyone. That is not 25 years or 30 years from now, which is the problem of Social Security. Americans seem to be tuned into that Social Security is in trouble in the long term and that we cannot sustain it. The insolvency of Social Security is a little over 30 years away. It is a problem and we have to deal with that. We have a little bit more time.

Medicare is an immediate problem. Medicare runs out of money in 7 years. You would think, as I said, as mature adults elected here to govern the country, we could sit down and accept that,

accept the findings of the trustees. Four out of the six Medicare trustees are Clinton administration officials. They have issued this report that says, "The Medicare trust fund will be able to pay benefits for only 7 years and is severely out of financial balance in the long-range."

That is what this chart shows. Here is where the Medicare trust fund is exhausted, 2002. Here is the gap. It grows and grows. This is the revenue shortfall. It only gets worse, particularly in the outyears when the baby boomers start to retire.

There are less people working to support the Medicare trust fund. It is obvious that we have to do something; it is obvious that the time to act is now while we have a meager surplus that is going to be exhausted, as I said before, in 7 years. You would think that we could come to the table, accept the Clinton administration's own findings that this is a problem that must be solved, accept their own recommendation—again, the recommendation of the trustees—that says we need urgent action. But, no, you are going to see the big dance that goes on around here, the big dance on how we are going to scare seniors, lie to them; and anybody who wants to touch Medicare is not going to try to save Medicare. Oh, no, they just want to take the program away from them. They want to ruin Medicare. They want to break their promises to the American public.

Why? Why would people say things that are blatantly false? Why would they say that? Well, it is certainly not to preserve the trust fund, certainly not to make sure Medicare is there for future generations—I should not even say future—this generation of seniors. That certainly is not the reason they are saying it. Why are they saying it? Very simple: Political gain.

Political gain. It is a tried and true American maxim in American politics, and that is if you can square seniors enough so that they will vote against the other side who wants to take their programs away, you can win elections and then after the election, you will discover the problem. After the election is over, after you have reaped the benefits by scaring seniors that these bad guys out here who want to touch Medicare are out really to kill the program, after you have accomplished the scare tactics and succeeded in victory, then come to the floor, come to the American people after the election, after you have won and lied, and after you have accomplished what you wanted, and then say, look, the Medicare trust fund is going to be out of money, we have to do something. That is what is going to happen. That is what happened on Social Security in 1982. It is going to try to happen in 1996.

I just hope—I really hope—that the American public is smart enough to see through these scare tactics, not only by the Clinton administration, by the Democrats here in Congress, by these

shameless, shameless seniors organizations who pray on the fear of seniors to swell their membership and get contributions and be able to fund their lobbyists and TV commercials and continue to go out there and feed on this frenzy. I hope the American public and seniors can see through this. It is a scare tactic that should not succeed. See through this. See that there is a problem, and see that those who want to tackle the problem now are doing it because we care, not because we want to destroy a program.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under a previous order, the Senator from Montana is recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

(The remarks of Mr. BURNS pertaining to the introduction of S. 745 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, there will be several people this morning who have reserved time to speak on the potential sale of the Power Marketing Administrations.

I ask unanimous consent to also speak on this issue during morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OPPOSE SALE OF PMA'S

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I would like to add my very strong voice to that of my colleague from South Dakota, who will be speaking on this; the Senator from Montana, Senator BAUCUS; as well as Senator DASCHLE, on the potential sale of the Power Marketing Administrations that the administration has proposed.

There are a lot of things wrong with the Federal Government, very frankly, and I know we should always be looking for the functions we can privatize, that are done better in the private sector than by the Federal Government.

The American system of the Power Marketing Administrations is, in my experience and that of many of my constituents, an example of something that the Government does well in direct partnership with those folks living in rural regions of America.

The electrification of rural America is a success story because it involved a true partnership between the Federal Government and the people of rural America who rely on the electrification of the REA's to provide their power.

The partnership with the Federal Government has been a mutually beneficial one. America's rural electric cooperatives and small municipal power systems agreed to purchase the initially more expensive Federal hydropower because they understood the long-term security of a publicly owned power system.

Without the commitment to purchase the power, the system could not

have been built. The REA members and other customers pay for electricity based on the cost of providing service, retirement of the construction debt, and interest.

The system is working well, Mr. President. Those who rely on electrical power from the system are repaying the Federal Government for capital investment costs of building a system, as well as the annual operation and maintenance costs of the system.

Down the road, when the projects are paid for, these dams and facilities will be federally owned and will continue to provide significant sources of revenue to the Federal Government.

The proposal of selling off the PMA's has a great deal of uncertainty. It is clearly our goal to cut the deficit, but on the other hand, if we are simply doing things to privatize another Government function without understanding the effects of doing so, I think it is rather risky.

Is it change just for the sake of change? I hope not. If it is to maximize deficit reduction, that means we sell to the highest bidder. If we do that, clearly the highest bidder will have to raise the electric rates for rural America, and that will not do any good for those who represent the States.

The rural regions that are having the toughest economic times of anywhere must have low rural electric rates. As Congress considers a new farm bill and the probability that many vulnerable programs may be cut or eliminated, I think it would be cruel to also turn out the lights.

If, on the other hand, those who represent rural regions insist, and we will, that there be a safe prohibition placed on the rate increases if they are sold, then it seems to me we are truly in a pointless exercise, privatizing a function that most agree serves its customers well at no annual cost to the Treasury.

I want to thank my colleagues, Senator PRESSLER, Senator DASCHLE, and Senator BAUCUS, for arranging a section on which they will also speak.

I yield the floor.

PUBLIC POWER

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I rise today to express my opposition to the administration's proposal to sell the Western Area, Southwestern, and Southeastern Power Marketing Administrations—collectively known as the PMA's.

Public power serves many functions in South Dakota. As a sparsely populated State, utilities are faced with the challenge of how to get affordable electricity into small cities and communities where there are less than two people per mile of transmission line. Public power provides the solution.

In public power utilities, the only investors are the consumers. Revenues are reinvested in the community—in the form of taxes and services. And, the

low cost of power is essential to encourage economic development in small cities and towns.

Public power, purchased through the Western Area Power Administration, known as WAPA, costs South Dakotans an average of 2.5 cents less than the market rate. This allows revenue to be reinvested in additional transmission lines, and better service. The availability of hydropower from the Missouri River to rural cooperatives and municipalities have helped to stabilize rates. With 7,758 miles of transmission lines in the Pick-Sloan region, WAPA can serve 133,100 South Dakotans—without charging them an arm and a leg.

Public power has brought more than electricity to South Dakota. For example, Missouri Basin Municipal Power Agency, based in Sioux Falls, has embarked on a program offering incentives for planting trees. The goal is to plant at least one tree for each 112,500 meters in the Agency's membership territory. In fact, Missouri Basin was recognized by the Department of Energy for outstanding participation in this Global Climate Change Program. I congratulate Tom Heller of Missouri Basin for this excellent community service program.

Public power also brings new jobs to the communities it serves. In part due to the low cost of power from East River Electric, there are now three injection molding plants based in Madison, SD—creating snowmobile parts. Arctic Cat, PPD, and Falcon Plastics employ approximately 200 people in Madison.

East River also is involved in other economic development activities. It provides classes to help the community attract businesses, and offers grants for feasibility studies associated with economic development projects. South Dakota clearly has benefited from the work of Jeff Nelson, as the general manager of the East River Electric Power Cooperative.

Public power is a South Dakota success story. It is the source of innovation, development, and community pride. I am sure the same is true in other towns and communities across America. In spite of these success stories, the Clinton administration—and several Members of Congress—want to put an end to this success.

Specifically, President Clinton has proposed selling WAPA and two other power marketing administrations in order to pay for the modest tax cut he has promised the American people.

In essence, this would force South Dakotans—and public power consumers in small cities and rural areas—to cover for the rest of America.

Under the President's plan, South Dakotans would not be able to enjoy the promised tax cut. Why? Because the sale of the PMA's could result in rate increases totaling more than \$47 million.

In addition, I question the claim made by the administration that the